

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1782

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USLO RIYADH

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

UNCLAS JIDDA 2974

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EAGR, SA

SUBJ: FAS FOODSTUFFS SALES TEAM: WRAP-UP REPORT

1. SUMMARY. FIRST-EVER FOODSTUFFS SALES TEAM VISIT TO JIDDA APRIL 7-11 WAS SUCCESS, AS MEASURED BY NUMBER OF USEFUL APPOINTMENTS, SALES AND COMMENTS BY TEAM MEMBERS. COMMOFFS PARTICULARLY VIEW INTEREST OF NEWER SAUDI FIRMS IN FOOD MISSION AS IMPORTANT IN OPENING UP COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITES IN MARKET FOR ALL KINDS OF PRODUCTS IN FACE OF OLD ESTABLISHED MERCHANT. FIRMS. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS USDA FOLLOW-UP WITH ANOTHER VISIT NEXT YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. EIGHT MEMBERS, REPRESENTING SEVEN COMPANIES, HAD AT LEAST 101 APPOINTMENTS IN JIDDA, MANY OF THEM AT U.S. COMMERCIAL CENTER, NOT COUNTING MANY IMPROMPTU MEETINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING APRIL 8 RECEPTION. WHILE MOST APPOINTMENTS WERE INDIVIDUAL, AT SAUDI FIRMS' REQUEST POST ALSO ARRANGED SEVERAL GROUP MEETINGS, WHICH TEAM MEMBERS GENERALLY DISLIKED, ONE REASON THEY DISLIKED IT WAS THAT THEY COMPETED AGAINST EACH OTHER, FLOATING "NEW" PRODUCTS WHICH COMPETED WITH THOSE OF OTHER TEAM MEMBERS, IF OPPORTUNITY APPEARED RIPE, POST WILL TRY AVOID DOUBLING UP APPOINTMENTS IF USDA SENDS ANOTHER
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MISSION, BUT GIVEN TIME DEMANDS ON MOST IMPORTANT SAUDI FIRMS IT IS UNLIKELY THAT PROBLEM CAN BE TOTALLY AVOIDED. GENERALLY, TEAM MEMBERS FOUND THAT THEY COULD ARRANGE PRIVATE FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS WITH SAUDI BUSINESSMEN IF MUTUAL RAPPORT DEVELOPED AT GROUP MEETING.

3. RECEPTION AT U.S. COMMERCIAL CENTER APRIL 8 WILL ATTENDED

BY OVER 60 PERSONS. CENTER OFFICES WERE BUSY ALL EVENING WITH PRIVATE MEETINGS BETWEEN TEAM AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN.

4. MOST POPULAR TEAM MEMBERS WERE THOSE SUPPLYING MIXED BASKET OF CANNED FRUITS, JUICES AND VEGETABLES, THERE WAS ALSO A MARKEDLY STRONG INTEREST IN TURKEY PRODUCTS, PAPETTI'S FROZEN EGG PRODUCT, BOTH RELATIVELY NEW TO THIS MARKET, AND IN FMC CONSULTANT'S MEAT OFFALS WHICH APPEAR TO BE IN UNUSUALLY STRONG DEMAND DURING ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE PERIOD. SALES PROJECTIONS COULD NOT BE ASCERTAINED, BUT ONE FIRM SOLD TWO CONTAINERS, ANOTHER SOLD FOUR CONTAINERS, AND SEVERAL SOLD SIZEABLE "SAMPLE" ORDERS. PINEBREEZE FARMS REP STATED UPON ARRIVAL THAT SOLE PURPOSE HIS TRIP WAS TO FIND AND APPOINT AN AGENT, UPON CLOSE OF VISIT, HE HAD NOT FORMALLY APPOINTED AGENT BUT INDICATED HE IDENTIFIED STRONG CANDIDATE. FIRMS WHICH SIMPLY HAD MARKET RESEARCH AS PURPOSE OF VISIT SEEMED SATISFIED THAT THEY ACCOMPLISHED THEIR GOAL. NEWLY ESTABLISHED SAUDI FIRMS WHICH ARE ESTABLISHING SUPERMARKETS, AND UP-AND-COMING SAUDI COMMISSION AGENTS WERE EXTREMELY WELL REPRESENTED AT APPOINTMENTS. EMBASSY FEELS THAT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SPILL-OVER RESULT OF THIS MISSION, SINCE U.S. PRODUCTS WILL BE REPRESENTED BY ALL FIRMS AS MARKET BROADENS.

5. ONLY BECAUSE OF POOR BOOKEEPING PRACTICES OF HOTEL, WE PROBABLY WILL NOT RPT NOT BE CHARGED FOR NO-SHOW OF MR. MELINA, ATTENTION UNTIL TEAM ARRIVED. AS FOR EXPERIENCE OF MR. LEHRER. UNCLASSIFIED

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TEAM LEADER, WHO WAS DENIED RE-ENTRY INTO SAUDI ARABIA, UNFORTUNATELY SAG RARELY ISSUES MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS.

6. TEAM WAS CHARGED FOR 50 KILOGRAMS OVERWEIGHT UPON DEPARTURE FOR CAIRO. COST OF 390 RIYALS WAS VOLUNTEERED BY SEVERAL MEMBERS.

7. PHOTOGRAPHERS, EMBASSY IS POUCHING TO LEHRER NEGATIVES OF FOUR ROLLS OF FILM TAKEN BY PRIVATE PHOTOGRAPHER, INDIVIDUAL PRINTS WERE EITHER SOLD BY PHOTOGRAPHER OR GIVEN BY POST TO TEAM MEMBERS.

8. PUBLICITY: ADVANCE PUBLICITY WAS EXCELLENT, THANKS TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY COOPERATION, WITH PLACEMENTS IN SIX MOST IMPORTANT DAILIES, AND ADDITIONAL STORY IN WEEKLY "SAUDI ECONOMIC SURVEY." "SAUDI GAZETTE" INTERVIEW OF TONY BARTHOLOMEW, WHO TOLD US LATER THAT HE WAS MISQUOTED, PRODUCED ARTICLE WHICH FOCUSED ON "PROBLEMS" ENCOUNTERED BY ISLAMIC SLAUGHTER REGULATIONS AND U.S. ANTI-BOYCOTT LAWS. LOCAL IMPACT OF THIS ARTICLE WAS MINIMAL.

9. COMMENT: THIS FIRST USDA FOODSTUFFS SALES TEAM WAS WELL

RECEIVED BY SAUDI BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WE BELIEVE MEMBERS
DID WELL. FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS WILL OF
COURSE BE NEEDED TO CONSOLIDATE INITIAL SALES PROMOTIONS.
POST SUGGESTS USDA CONSIDER SPONSORING ANOTHER SALES TEAM
EITHER IN FALL 1978 OR SPRING 1979, FOCUSING ON COMMON FRUITS
AND VEGETABLES, AND ON NEW-TO MARKET PRODUCT. PER
DISCUSSION WITH LEHRER. POST IS READY INITIATE PRICE/PRODUCT
SURVEY OF LOCAL SUPERMARKETS, PENDING USDA BUDGET AUTHORIZATION
WHOSE RESULTS COULD BE USEFUL TO RECRUITMENT OF NEXT SALES
TEAM.
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